

STATE OF NEW YORK
SUPREME COURT

COUNTY OF NEW YORK

MARK CANNON

Plaintiff,

SUMMONS

Index No: _____

v.

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
and MONSIGNOR FARRELL
HIGH SCHOOL

Defendants.

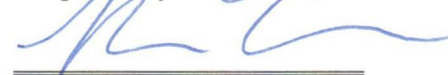
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to Answer the attached Complaint in this action and to serve upon Plaintiff's attorneys a copy of your Answer, or, if the Complaint is not served with this Summons, to serve a notice of appearance, on the Plaintiffs' attorneys within twenty (20) days after the service of this Summons, exclusive of the day of service, or within thirty (30) days after the service is complete if this Summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated: November 13, 2019
New York, New York

Respectfully Submitted,



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STATE OF NEW YORK
SUPREME COURT

COUNTY OF NEW YORK

MARK CANNON

Plaintiff,

v.

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
and MONSIGNOR FARRELL
HIGH SCHOOL

Defendants.

VERIFIED COMPLAINT
JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Index No: _____

Plaintiff, Mark Cannon ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, Thomas LaBarbera Counselors at Law and Andreozzi & Associates, P.C., as and for their Complaint in this matter against Defendants Archdiocese of New York and Monsignor Farrell High School ("Defendants"), hereby alleges as follows:

Nature of the Action

1. Plaintiff brings this action against Defendants pursuant to New York's Child Victims Act ("CVA") (N.Y. C.P.L.R. § 214-g).

Parties

2. Defendants Archdiocese of New York ("Archdiocese" or "New York Archdiocese") is a Roman Catholic Archdiocese located at 1011 First Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

3. At all relevant times, the Archdiocese created, oversaw, managed, controlled, directed and operated parishes, churches, and/or schools of the Archdiocese, including Defendant Monsignor Farrell High School, located in Staten Island, New York, at 2900 Amboy Rd, Staten Island, NY 10306.

4. At all relevant times, the Archdiocese oversaw, managed, controlled, and directed all priests assigned to work in parishes, churches, and/or schools of the Archdiocese, including Brother Salvatore Ferro.

5. Plaintiff Mark Cannon is an adult resident of New York.

Jurisdiction and Venue

6. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendants pursuant to NY CPLR § 302.

7. This Court, as a court of general jurisdiction, has subject matter jurisdiction over this action.

8. Venue in the County of New York is proper pursuant to NY CPLR § 503.

Facts

Sexual Abuse in the Archdiocese and Brother Ferro

9. As is now well-known, child sex abuse by Catholic clergy was widespread, resulting in major sex abuse scandals involving Catholic Archdioceses and Dioceses around the world, including those in Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and many other cities.

10. For many years, however, the scope of the Catholic child sex-abuse epidemic was unknown.

11. Thanks to an investigation in 2002 by the Boston Globe's "Spotlight" team, made more famous by the 2015 film *Spotlight*, the public is now aware that thousands of children have been sexually abused by Catholic priests, and that many of those predator priests were protected by Catholic officials.

12. The New York Archdiocese was no different.

13. Throughout the history of the Archdiocese, many clerics associated with the Archdiocese have been accused of sexual misconduct and/or abuse.

14. The Archdiocese has thus been aware of the risk of sexual abuse by clerics for decades, well before the sexual abuse of the Plaintiff, which is described herein.

15. Sexual abuse by of children within the Archdiocese was a known, preventable hazard, which the Archdiocese failed to respond to.

16. The Plaintiff's abuser was Christian Brother Salvatore Ferro ("Brother Ferro" or "Perpetrator").

17. Brother Ferro was one of the more prolific abusers in the Christian Brothers, who was transferred from school to school because of Ferro's sexual abuse, including within the Archdiocese.

18. Upon information and belief, Brother Ferro ("Brother Ferro") was a religious brother, school administrator, and/or teacher under the auspices of the Archdiocese, and/or employed by the Archdiocese, to serve Catholic families, including Plaintiff and his family.

19. Ferro began sexually abusing children early in his tenure as a cleric, well before Plaintiff was abused.

20. Upon information and belief, the Archdiocese had actual and/or constructive knowledge regarding Ferro's abuse of children prior to Plaintiff's abuse.

21. Upon information and belief, Archdiocesan officials and/or agents knew Ferro was engaged in inappropriate behavior children, before, during, and after Plaintiff's abuse.

22. Upon information and belief, at all relevant times Defendant Monsignor Farrell High School ("Monsignor Farrell") was a not-for-profit religious corporation organized under New York law and wholly owned, operated, and controlled by the Archdiocese.

23. Upon information and belief, Monsignor Farrell is currently a not-for-profit religious corporation organized under New York law with its principal office in Staten Island, New York.

24. Brother Salvatore Ferro was a religious brother, school administrator, and/or teacher employed by Monsignor Farrell to serve Catholic families including Plaintiff and his family under the auspices of the Archdiocese.

25. Ferro was employed by Monsignor Farrell, including during a time when he was principal of Monsignor Farrell, under the auspices of the Archdiocese.

26. Ferro used his position as a religious brother, school administrator, and/or teacher to groom and to sexually abuse Plaintiff pursuant to his role(s) with Defendants.

27. In approximately 1974 or 1975, Ferro sexually abused the Plaintiff in his office at Monsignor Farrell.

28. At no time did the Defendants make Plaintiff or his family aware of Brother Ferro's history, or of the known risk of abuse posed by him and other Catholic clergy.

29. Ferro used his position within the Defendants to sexually abuse the Plaintiff.

30. The Archdiocese and/or Monsignor Farrell held Ferro out to the Plaintiff and his family as the Defendants' agent, who had been appropriately vetted, screened, and approved.

31. The Plaintiff and his parents reasonably relied on the acts and representations of the Defendants.

32. The Plaintiff implicitly trusted Ferro due to Ferro's relationship to Defendants.

33. The Defendants' actions and omissions herein were willful, wanton, and/or reckless.

34. As described, Ferro sexually abused the Plaintiff, in addition to numerous other children.

35. As a direct result of the Defendants' conduct described herein, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer as follows:

- a. Severe and permanent emotional distress, including physical manifestations of emotional distress;
- b. Deprivation of the full enjoyment of life;
- c. Expenses for medical and psychological treatment, therapy, and counseling; and,
- d. Loss of income and/or loss of earning capacity.

Causes of Action

First Cause of Action Negligent Retention and Negligent Supervision

36. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges every allegation set forth throughout this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

37. Defendant(s) owed a duty of care to all minor persons, including Plaintiff, who were likely to encounter Perpetrator in his role as priest, counselor, trustee, director, officer, employee, agent, servant and/or volunteer of Defendant(s).

38. Defendant(s) owed a duty of care to all minor persons, including Plaintiff, to ensure Perpetrator did not use his position to injure minors by sexual assault, abuse, and/or sexual contact.

39. Defendant(s) had an express and/or implied duty to provide a reasonably safe environment for Plaintiff and assumed the duty to protect and care for him.

40. Defendant(s) negligently, grossly negligently, and/or recklessly hired, retained, and supervised Perpetrator though they knew or should have known that Perpetrator posed a threat of harm to minors.

41. Defendant(s) negligently, grossly negligently, and/or recklessly retained Perpetrator with actual or constructive knowledge of Perpetrator's propensity for the type of behavior which resulted in Plaintiff's injuries in this action.

42. Defendant(s) failed to investigate Perpetrator's history of sexual abuse and, through the exercise of reasonable diligence, should have known of Perpetrator's propensity for child sexual abuse.

43. Defendant(s) should have made an appropriate investigation of Perpetrator and failed to do so, which would have revealed the unsuitability of Perpetrator for continued employment and it was unreasonable for Defendant(s) to retain Perpetrator in light of the information they knew or should have known.

44. Defendant(s) negligently retained Perpetrator in a position where he had access to children and could foreseeably cause harm which Plaintiff would not have been subjected to had Defendant taken reasonable care.

45. In failing to timely remove Perpetrator from working with children or terminate the employment of Perpetrator, Defendant(s) failed to exercise the degree of care that a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

46. Defendant(s) knew or should have known of Perpetrator's propensity for sexual assault, abuse, and/or sexual contact with minors, the same conduct which caused Plaintiff's injuries.

47. Defendant(s) knew or should have known of Perpetrator's propensity for sexual assault, abuse, and/or sexual contact with minors prior to, or at the time of, Plaintiff's injuries.

48. The Plaintiff's sexual abuse by Perpetrator was foreseeable, *i.e.*, Defendant(s) were on notice of prior similar incidents and Plaintiff's sexual abuse was the proximate result of Defendant(s)'s negligent hiring, retention, and supervision of Perpetrator.

49. Perpetrator's acts described herein were undertaken, and/or enabled by, and/or during the course, and/or within the scope of Perpetrator's employment, appointment, assignment, and/or agency with Defendant(s).

50. Defendant(s) took no precautions to prevent Plaintiff's injuries.

51. Defendant(s) failed to take reasonable precautions to prevent Plaintiff's injuries.

52. Defendant(s) gave improper or ambiguous orders or failed to make proper regulations, and/or employed improper persons or instrumentalities in work involving risk of harm to others.

53. Defendant(s) failed adequately to supervise the activities of Perpetrator.

54. Defendant(s) failed to protect against or warn the Plaintiff or his family of the known risk of priest abuse.

55. Defendant(s) permitted, and/or intentionally failed and/or neglected to prevent, negligent and/or grossly negligent conduct and/or allowed other tortious conduct by persons, whether or not their servants and/or agents and/or employees, upon premises or with instrumentalities under their control.

56. Defendant(s) allowed the acts of omission and/or commission and/or any or all of the allegations set forth in this Complaint to occur.

57. Defendant(s) actions were negligent, grossly negligent, willful, wanton, malicious, reckless, and/or outrageous in their disregard for the rights and safety of Plaintiff.

58. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant(s)'s actions and omissions, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer injuries, as described herein.

59. By reason of the foregoing, the Defendant(s) is/are liable to the Plaintiff, jointly, severally and/or in the alternative liable to the Plaintiff for compensatory damages and for punitive damages, together with interest and costs.

Second Cause of Action
Negligence/Gross Negligence/Recklessness

60. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges every allegation set forth throughout this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

61. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care to protect the Plaintiff from injury.

62. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty of care because Defendant(s) had a special relationship with Plaintiff. Defendant(s) also had a duty arising from the special relationship that existed with Plaintiff, Plaintiff's parents, and other parents of young, innocent, vulnerable children to properly train and supervise clerics.

63. Defendant(s) special relationship arose because of the high degree of vulnerability of the children entrusted to their care. As a result of this high degree of vulnerability and risk of sexual abuse inherent in such a special relationship, Defendant(s) had a duty to establish measures of protection not necessary for persons who are older and better able to safeguard themselves.

64. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty to protect Plaintiff from harm because each Defendant also had a special relationship with Perpetrator.

65. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty of reasonable care because they solicited youth and parents for participation in their youth programs; encouraged youth and parents to have the youth participate in their programs; undertook custody of minor children, including Plaintiff; promoted their facilities and programs as being safe for children; held their agents, including Perpetrator, out as safe to work with children; encouraged parents and children to spend time with their agents; and/or encouraged their agents, including Perpetrator, to spend time with, interact with, and recruit children.

66. As a result of Plaintiff being a minor, and by Defendants undertaking the care and guidance of the Plaintiff, Defendant(s) also held a position of empowerment over Plaintiff.

67. Defendant(s), by holding themselves out as being able to provide a safe environment for children, solicited and/or accepted this position of empowerment.

68. Defendant(s), through its employees, exploited this power over Plaintiff and, thereby, put the minor Plaintiff at risk for sexual abuse.

69. Defendant(s) entered an express and/or implied duty to properly supervise Plaintiff and provide a reasonably safe environment for children.

70. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty to properly supervise Plaintiff to prevent harm from foreseeable dangers.

71. Defendant(s) had the duty to exercise the same degree of care over minors under their control as a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

72. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty to properly supervise Plaintiff to prevent harm from generally foreseeable dangers.

73. Defendant(s) owed Plaintiff a duty to protect Plaintiff from harm because Defendant(s) invited Plaintiff onto their property and Perpetrator posed a dangerous condition on Defendant(s)'s property.

74. Defendant(s) breached its duties to Plaintiff.

75. Defendants failed to use ordinary care in determining whether their facilities were safe and/or determining whether they had enough information to represent their facilities as safe.

76. Defendants' breach of their duties include, but are not limited to:

- a. failure to protect Plaintiff from a known danger;
- b. failure to have sufficient policies and procedures in place to prevent child sex abuse;
- c. failure to properly implement policies and procedures to prevent child sex abuse;
- d. failure to take reasonable measures to ensure that policies and procedures to prevent child sex abuse were working;
- e. failure to adequately inform families and children of the risks of child sex abuse;
- f. failure to investigate risks of child molestation;
- g. failure to properly train the employees at institutions and programs within Defendant(s) geographical confines;
- h. failure to train the parishioners within Defendant(s) geographical confines about the dangers of sexual abuse by clergy;
- i. failure to have any outside agency test their safety procedures;
- j. failure to protect the children in their programs from child sex abuse;
- k. failure to adhere to the applicable standard of care for child safety;
- l. failure to investigate the amount and type of information necessary to represent the institutions, programs, leaders and people as safe;

m. failure to train their employees properly to identify signs of child molestation by fellow employees; and/or,

n. failure by relying upon mental health professionals, and/or failure by relying on people who claimed that they could treat child molesters.

77. Defendant(s) also breached their duty to Plaintiff by failing to warn Plaintiff and Plaintiff's family of the risk that Perpetrator posed and the risks of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions. Defendant(s) also failed to warn them about any of the knowledge that Defendant(s) had about child sexual abuse.

78. Defendant(s) additionally violated a legal duty by failing to report known and/or suspected abuse of children by Perpetrator and/or its other agents to the police and law enforcement.

79. Prior to the sexual abuse of Plaintiff, Defendant(s) learned or should have learned that Perpetrator was not fit to work with children.

80. Defendant(s), by and through their agents, servants and/or employees, became aware, or should have become aware of Perpetrator's propensity to commit sexual abuse and of the risk to Plaintiff's safety.

81. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that they did not have sufficient information about whether or not their leaders and people working at Parish and other Catholic institutions were safe.

82. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that there was a risk of child sex abuse for children participating in Catholic programs and activities.

83. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that they did not have enough information about whether or not there was a risk of child sex abuse for children participating in Catholic programs and activities.

84. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that Defendant(s) had numerous agents who had sexually molested children.

85. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that child molesters have a high rate of recidivism. Defendant(s) knew or should have known that there was a specific danger of child sex abuse for children.

86. Defendant(s) negligently, grossly negligently, and/or recklessly deemed Perpetrator was fit to work with children; and/or that any previous suitability problems Perpetrator had were fixed and cured; and/or that Perpetrator would not sexually molest children; and/or that Perpetrator would not injure children.

87. Defendant(s) actions created a foreseeable risk of harm to Plaintiff.

88. Plaintiff was a foreseeable victim.

89. Defendant(s) actions were negligent, grossly negligent, willful, wanton, malicious, reckless, and/or outrageous in its disregard for the rights and safety of Plaintiff.

90. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant(s)'s actions and omissions, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer injuries, as described herein.

91. By reason of the foregoing, Defendant(s) is/are liable to the Plaintiff, jointly, severally and/or in the alternative liable to the Plaintiff for compensatory damages and for punitive damages, together with interest and costs.

Third Cause of Action
Negligent Training and Supervision of Employees

92. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges every allegation set forth throughout this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

93. At all times material, Perpetrator was employed by Defendant(s) and was under each Defendant(s)'s direct supervision, employ, and control when he committed the wrongful acts alleged herein.

94. Perpetrator engaged in the wrongful conduct while acting in the course and scope of his employment with Defendant(s) and/or accomplished the sexual abuse by virtue of his job-created authority.

95. Defendant(s) had a duty, arising from their employment of Perpetrator, to ensure that he did not sexually molest children.

96. Defendant(s) owed a duty to train and educate employees and administrators and establish adequate and effective policies and procedures calculated to detect, prevent, and address inappropriate behavior and conduct between clerics and children.

97. Defendant(s) were negligent in the training, supervision, and instruction of their employees.

98. Defendant(s) failed to timely and properly educate, train, supervise, and/or monitor their agents or employees with regard to policies and procedures that should be followed when sexual abuse of a child is suspected or observed.

99. Defendant(s) were additionally negligent in failing to supervise, monitor, chaperone, and/or investigate Perpetrator and/or in failing to create, institute, and/or enforce rules, policies, procedures, and/or regulations to prevent Perpetrator's sexual abuse of Plaintiff.

100. In failing to properly supervise Perpetrator, and in failing to establish such training procedures for employees and administrators, Defendant(s) failed to exercise the degree of care that a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under similar circumstances.

101. Defendant(s)'s actions were negligent, grossly negligent, willful, wanton, malicious, reckless, and/or outrageous in its disregard for the rights and safety of Plaintiff.

102. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant(s)'s actions and omissions, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer injuries, as described herein.

103. By reason of the foregoing, Defendant(s) is/are liable to the Plaintiff, jointly, severally and/or in the alternative liable to the Plaintiff for compensatory damages and for punitive damages, together with interest and costs.

JURY DEMAND


104. Plaintiff demand a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendant(s) on each cause of action as follows:

- a) Awarding compensatory damages in an amount to be proved at trial, in an amount that exceeds the jurisdictional limits of all lower courts which would otherwise have jurisdiction;
- b) Awarding punitive damages to the extent permitted by law;
- c) Awarding prejudgment interest to the extent permitted by law;
- d) Awarding costs and fees of this action, including attorneys' fees, to the extent permitted by law; and
- e) Awarding such other and further relief as to this Court may seem just and proper.

Dated: November 13, 2019
New York, New York

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathleen Thomas, Esq.

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(NY Admission Pending)

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

VERIFICATION

STATE OF New York,COUNTY OF Richmond ss:

Mark P. Cannon, being duly sworn, deposes and says: That he is a plaintiff in this action; that he has read the foregoing Complaint and knows the contents thereof; that the same is true to the knowledge of deponent, except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters, deponent believes it to be true.

Mark P Cannon
[Name]

Sworn to before me this
19th day of October 2019.

[Signature]
NOTARY PUBLIC

